

and religion were present with one common goal: to assure that everyone in a terminal or incurable state, has the choice to do what they wish, at the end of their lives, in order to die with their loved ones, without suffering, with the help of a prescription of medication from a physician. At the last national polling, at least 74% of our citizens agree that this is our right. Legislation should not be needed but the Anti-choice people and some intolerant religions with large bank rolls and some of the AMA want to take this right away from us through legislation and we are being forced to fight back. Medicine has changed in the last 30 years: with the advent of sophisticated machines and medications, persons who would have died peacefully in prior years are now artificially forced to linger in a sometimes painful and cruel dying process.

This is not everyone's wish—*certainly not mine*.

Highlights of the conference was the talk, followed by questions and answers by Mr Geoffrey Feiger, the attorney for Dr Jack Kevorkian. His main message was "They" are trying to take away our right to die when and how we want. "They" would love to talk about this for the next 100 years. "They" will try to bankrupt us. "They" will do everything in their power to enforce their views on us - *we must fight this intrusion into our lives*. The video of Geoffrey Feiger, Esq. is available through the Hemlock Hawaii Chapter, which is listed in the Honolulu telephone directory.

Editor's Note:

Andi van der Voort RN was born and educated in Canada, and received postgraduate training in psychology in Costa Mesa, California. She has worked at Queen's, Castle, and St. Francis Medical Centers. Though officially semi-retired, she now serves as president of Kaneohe Bay Toastmasters, Humanists Hawaii, and Hemlock Hawaii. She is far from retired! Mrs. van der Voort and her husband of 38 years live in Lanikai. She is a frequent speaker representing Hemlock Hawaii at civic and educational meetings. Recently, she served on a University of Hawaii panel on Death with Dignity on the Big Island. This tape is currently aired on Olelo TV.

President's Message


John S. Spangler MD

This is the month for legislative action and many bills including medical ones will be debated and hopefully HMA will help with this as we have done in the past. We tend to complain about the government but we need to support the process and hope to make it better.

Also February is love month with Valentine's Day. You need to express your love this month!

**Tired of
throwing
your weight
around?**

**American Heart
Association**
Fighting Heart Disease
and Stroke



Exercise.

Special Commentary

W. Mitchell Sams, Jr. MD
President, American Academy of Dermatology

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An Open Letter to My Son

Dear Hunter:

Now that you have completed the first three years of medical school and are increasingly excited about patient contacts and your future role as a physician, I'd like to take this opportunity to pass on to you some thoughts that I have developed over many years of practice and that, if followed, are certain to make your own professional life more rewarding and your patients more satisfied.

- Don't forget to smile as you enter the patient's room. Such a simple gesture is terribly important and puts the patient immediately at ease.
- Remember that a patient often is frightened and lonely. Take the time and expend the effort to sit down with that patient, relax and just talk and listen, rather than standing as though you are in a hurry to leave the room.
- Write your notes about the patient and your prescription in the patient's room. It is much more meaningful to them and permits you to spend more time with the patient. They may think of other questions important to them when you are relaxed.
- Touch the patient, even if just lightly on the arm. This shows you are not afraid of catching whatever they have (whether skin disease or not), but also conveys concern and understanding. It can be a magnificently important gesture.
- Learn some "nonessential" information about the patient, such as hobbies, recent trips, children's achievements and ambitions. Then make a note of this in the chart and bring up the subject again on the next visit. You will be amazed at how impressed the patient is with your "memory" for these events.
- It is o.k. to express confidence in helping the patient that may not be totally justified by the options. The patient's confidence in you and in the real possibility of improving his or her condition can enhance the healing process.
- At the same time, tell the truth. If the disease is not curable (such as psoriasis or atopic dermatitis), say so, but quickly add that it can be controlled with appropriate therapy. I liken psoriasis to arthritis or diabetes; neither are curable but both are usually controllable. Patients seem to understand and accept that better.
- If you are running behind schedule, apologize to the patient as you enter the room. It puts them off guard if they were planning to complain and lets them know you are aware that their time is also important.
- Express your appreciation often and sincerely to the people who help you be what you are—your colleagues, your nurses, your residents, your receptionists. You will not be a success without them. Be sure you let them know that.

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